In the Claims.

1. – 76. (Cancelled.)

77. (Previously presented.) A process for the production of purified biodiesel from a feedstock containing at least one fatty acid, the process comprising:

(A) converting the at least one fatty acid in the feedstock to a glyceride;

(B) reacting the glyceride with at least one alcohol to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester wherein the reaction is conducted in a transesterification reactor and further wherein the at least one alcohol is added to the transesterification reactor at a rate that is greater than the stoichiometric amount of alcohol required for transesterification; and

(C) purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester by distillation or fractionation to produce purified biodiesel.

78. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 77, wherein step (A) comprises mixing the feedstock with glycerin for a time sufficient to convert the at least one fatty acid in the feedstock to a glyceride.

79. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 78, wherein the feedstock and glycerin is mixed at an elevated temperature in the absence of a catalyst.

80. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 77, wherein step (B) comprises reacting the glyceride with the at least one alcohol in the presence of an alkali catalyst to produce glycerin and the fatty acid alkyl ester.

81. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 78, wherein the glycerin is purified.

82. (Cancelled.)

83. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 78, wherein the at least one fatty acid in the feedstock is converted to a glyceride by adding glycerin to the feedstock while mixing and subjecting the admixture to reduced pressure.

84. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 77, wherein prior to step (A) the feedstock is conditioned to remove solids.

85. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 78, wherein the at least one fatty acid in the feedstock is converted to a glyceride in a glycerolysis reactor and further wherein glycerin is continuously added at a rate greater than the stoichiometric amount of

glycerin required for glycerolysis.

86. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 77, wherein the feedstock comprises at least one fatty acid at a concentration in the range of about 3 to about 97 percent by weight.

87. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 85, wherein in step (A) glycerin is continuously added to the glycerolysis reactor at a rate in the range of about 110 percent to about 400 percent of the stoichiometric amount of glycerin required for glycerolysis.

88. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~82~~ 77, wherein in step (B) the alcohol is added at a rate equal to about 200 percent of the stoichiometric amount of alcohol required for transesterification.

89. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 77, wherein the process is continuous.

90. (Currently amended.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting a feedstock containing free fatty acids with glycerin in at least two continuous stirred tank reactors to render glycerides;

(B) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

~~(B)~~ (C) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream; and

~~(C)~~ (D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

91. (Cancelled.)

92. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~91~~ 90, wherein the free fatty acids in the feedstock are reacted with glycerin in the absence of a catalyst.

93. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~91~~ 90, wherein the free fatty acids in the feedstock are reacted with glycerin in a glycerolysis reactor, wherein the amount of glycerin introduced into the reactor is a stoichiometric excess which is required to produce glycerides.

94. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 90, wherein the glycerides are

reacted with the at least one alcohol in the presence of an alkali catalyst.

95. (Cancelled.)

96. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~95~~ 90, further comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation system.

97. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~95~~ 90, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

98. (Cancelled.)

99. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~98~~ 90, wherein the at least two reactors have a combined residence time of not more than about 500 minutes.

100. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 90, wherein the at least one alcohol is a C_1-C_5 alcohol.

101. (Cancelled.)

102. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~91~~ 90, wherein the feedstock comprises free fatty acids at a concentration in the range of about 3 percent to about 97 percent by weight.

103. (Cancelled.)

104. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~103~~ 170, wherein the conditioned feedstock is a substantially uniform mixture of liquid lipids having a temperature in the range of about 35°C to about 250°C.

105. (Cancelled.)

106. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 94, wherein the alkali catalyst is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide and potassium hydroxide.

107. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim 90, wherein step ~~(A)~~ (B) is conducted at a temperature in the range from about 20°C to about 250°C.

108. (Cancelled.)

109. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim 90, wherein step ~~(A)~~ (B) is conducted at an absolute pressure in the range of about 1 bar to about 250 bar.

110. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim 109, wherein step ~~(A)~~ (B) is conducted at an absolute pressure of about 1 bar.

111. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~95~~ 90, wherein separation step ~~(B)~~ (C) is based on the density difference between the first liquid phase and the second liquid phase.

112. (Cancelled.)

113. (Cancelled.)

114. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~112~~ 167, wherein the fatty acid alkyl esters separated in the distillation or fractionation column meet ASTM specification D 6751.

115. (Cancelled.)

116. (Cancelled.)

117. (Cancelled.)

118. (Cancelled.)

119. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~118~~ 166, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

120. (Cancelled.)

121. (Cancelled.)

122. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~95~~ 81, ~~further comprising~~ wherein the glycerin is purified by adjusting the pH of ~~the~~ a glycerin rich stream ~~by adding an acid solution thereto~~ to neutral.

123. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~122~~ 169, wherein pH adjustment is performed using ion exchange media.

124. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 100, wherein the C_1-C_5 alcohol is methanol.

125. (Cancelled.)

126. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~125~~ 167, wherein step (A) is conducted in the presence of an alkali catalyst.

127. (Cancelled.)

128. (Cancelled.)

129. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~125~~ 167, wherein the at least one alcohol is a C_1-C_5 alcohol.

130. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 129, wherein the C_1-C_5 alcohol is methanol.

131. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~125~~ 90, wherein the process is continuous.

132. (Previously presented.) In a process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides wherein glycerides are reacted with an alcohol to produce fatty acid alkyl esters, the improvement comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl esters by distillation or fractionation in a column operated at a pressure below about 2 pounds per square inch absolute.

133. (Cancelled.)

134. (Currently amended.) The process of Claim ~~133~~ 132, wherein the distillation or fractionation is conducted in a column operated at a pressure in the range of about 0.1 pounds per square inch absolute to about 2 pounds per square inch absolute.

135. (Previously presented.) In a process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides wherein glycerides are reacted with an alcohol to produce fatty acid alkyl esters, the improvement comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl esters by distillation or fractionation in a column operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 280°C.

136. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 135, wherein the distillation or fractionation is conducted in a column operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

137. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 132, wherein the distillation or fractionation is conducted in column containing a packing material.

138. (Previously presented.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce a liquid stream containing fatty acid alkyl esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream from the liquid stream;

(C) adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral; and

(D) recovering biodiesel therefrom.

139. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 138, wherein subsequent to

step (C), the neutralized stream is purified.

140. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 139, wherein the neutralized stream is purified by distillation or fractionation.

141. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 138, wherein the glycerides of step (A) are obtained by reacting a feedstock containing free fatty acids with glycerin.

142. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 141, wherein the free fatty acids in the feedstock are reacted with glycerin in the absence of a catalyst.

143. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 138, wherein the glycerides are reacted with the at least one alcohol in the presence of an alkali catalyst.

144. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 138, wherein the at least one alcohol is a C_1-C_5 alcohol.

145. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 144, wherein the C_1-C_5 alcohol is methanol.

146. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 138, wherein the pH is adjusted in step (C) by the addition of a mineral acid.

147. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 146, wherein step (A) is conducted in the presence of an alkali catalyst and further wherein the mineral acid reacts with the alkali catalyst to render a precipitate and a precipitate-free permeate.

148. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 147, wherein the precipitate is separated from the precipitate-free permeate by filtration.

149. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 148, wherein prior to being separated from the precipitate-free permeate the precipitate is washed with methanol.

150. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 147, wherein the precipitate-free permeate is further separated into a second fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a second glycerin rich stream.

151. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 150, wherein the pH of the second glycerin rich stream is neutralized by the addition of caustic.

152. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 146, wherein the mineral acid converts soaps formed in step (B) to free fatty acids.

153. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 150, wherein the second fatty

alkyl ester rich stream is combined with the separated fatty acid alkyl ester stream of step (B) to form a combined stream.

154. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 153, wherein the combined stream is fractionated.

155. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 151, wherein the alcohol and water in the neutralized second glycerin rich stream are separated from the glycerin.

156. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 155, wherein the separated glycerin is further subjected to distillation or fractionation to remove high boiling impurities.

157. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 156, wherein the resulting glycerin stream is decolorized.

158. (Previously presented.) The process of Claim 135, wherein the distillation or fractionation is conducted in column containing a packing material.

159. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol in at least two continuous stirred tank reactors to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream; and

(C) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

160. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating at a temperature in the range of about 150°C to about 250°C a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream; and

(C) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

161. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting at a temperature in the range from about 55°C to about 65°C the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream; and

(C) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

162. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) separating the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column into a bottoms fraction comprising impurities, unsaponafiable materials, unreacted monoglycerides, unreacted diglycerides, unreacted triglycerides and fatty acids; an overhead fraction comprising primarily alcohol and a side stream fraction comprising at least one fatty acid alkyl ester product; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

163. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) separating the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column into a bottoms fraction, an overhead fraction comprising essentially alcohol and a side stream fraction comprising at least one fatty acid alkyl ester product; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

164. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) separating the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column operated at a pressure below about 2 pounds per square inch absolute into a bottoms fraction, an overhead fraction comprising primarily alcohol and a side stream fraction comprising at least one fatty acid alkyl ester product; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

165. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) separating the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column operated at a pressure in the range of about 0.1 pounds per square inch absolute to about 2 pounds per square inch absolute into a bottoms fraction, an overhead fraction comprising primarily alcohol and a side stream fraction comprising at least one fatty acid alkyl ester product; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

166. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second

liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) separating the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 280°C into a bottoms fraction, an overhead fraction comprising primarily alcohol and a side stream fraction comprising at least one fatty acid alkyl ester product; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

167. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) separating the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column containing a packing material into a bottoms fraction, an overhead fraction comprising primarily alcohol and a side stream fraction comprising at least one fatty acid alkyl ester product; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

168. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) purifying the glycerin rich stream by subjecting it to distillation; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

169. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(B) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream;

(C) adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream by adding an acid solution thereto; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

170. (New.) A process for the production of biodiesel from glycerides comprising:

(A) conditioning a feedstock containing free fatty acids and then reacting the feedstock with glycerin to render glycerides;

(B) reacting the glycerides with at least one alcohol to produce fatty acid esters and glycerin;

(C) separating a first liquid phase containing fatty acid alkyl esters and a second liquid phase containing glycerin to produce a fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream and a glycerin rich stream; and

(D) recovering a biodiesel containing the separated fatty acid alkyl esters.

171. (New.) The process of Claim 138, further comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column.

172. (New.) The process of Claim 171, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

173. (New.) The process of Claim 159, further comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column.

174. (New.) The process of Claim 159, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

175. (New.) The process of Claim 173, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

176. (New.) The process of Claim 160, further comprising purifying the fatty

acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column.

177. (New.) The process of Claim 160, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

178. (New.) The process of Claim 176, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

179. (New.) The process of Claim 161, further comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column.

180. (New.) The process of Claim 161, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

181. (New.) The process of Claim 179, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

182. (New.) The process of Claim 162, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

183. (New.) The process of Claim 163, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

184. (New.) The process of Claim 164, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

185. (New.) The process of Claim 165, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

186. (New.) The process of Claim 166, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

187. (New.) The process of Claim 167, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or

fractionation.

188. (New.) The process of Claim 168, further comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation system.

189. (New.) The process of Claim 188, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

190. (New.) The process of Claim 169, further comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation system.

191. (New.) The process of Claim 190, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.

192. (New.) The process of Claim 170, wherein the free fatty acids in the feedstock are reacted with glycerin in the absence of a catalyst.

193. (New.) The process of Claim 170, wherein the free fatty acids in the feedstock are reacted with glycerin in a glycerolysis reactor, wherein the amount of glycerin introduced into the reactor is a stoichiometric excess which is required to produce glycerides.

194. (New.) The process of Claim 170, further comprising purifying the fatty acid alkyl ester rich stream in a distillation or fractionation column.

195. (New.) The process of Claim 170, further comprising adjusting the pH of the glycerin rich stream to neutral and then purifying the neutralized stream by distillation or fractionation.

196. (New.) The process of Claim 194, wherein the distillation or fractionation column is operated at a temperature in the range of about 180°C to about 230°C.